Building an Electoral Powerhouse: Relational Voter Turnout & Organizing

2022 Program & Plans

Community Change Action's theory of change is rooted in the knowledge that we can change our politics by expanding the electorate and mobilizing voters who are not directly engaged by traditional campaigns.

First piloted in 2018, our relational voter turnout and organizing model trains voters to reach out to their friends and family. While this outreach is an element of all good organizing, what makes our model unique is the integration within a larger digital engagement program, the connecting of relationships online and offline, and the creation of a space for leaders to learn together. Investing early in relational voter turnout creates deep relationships that endure past Election Day — and that provide insurance and resiliency amid the unknowns of a pandemic, civil unrest, and a climate crisis.

Having invested in this work for multiple cycles, we have a competitive advantage that can now be deepened and scaled to win elections. In 2022 we will grow data and digital support for grassroots partners. We will also advance a hybrid model to link relational voter turnout with other forms of voter contact and organizing. By working side-by-side with established grassroots partners in priority states, we will ensure that these investments stay in local communities for years to come — and hope to sustain this infrastructure following the 2022 elections to defend our democracy and to push our governing agenda into 2024.
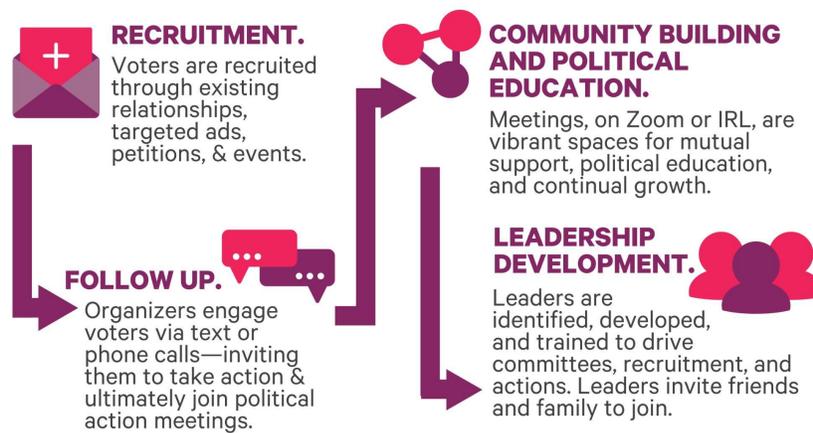
Our work builds on past successes of relational voter turnout in increasing civic engagement — both at the ballot box in pivotal election years and within a greater movement in off-cycle years. For example, in 2021:
- Relational voter turnout and organizing leaders sustained peer-to-peer relationships through text conversations with over 33,000 digital acquisition leads and personal contacts. Many of these conversations answered questions about the Child Tax Credit — an issue we expect to play a role in the 2022 elections — leading to hundreds of thousands of dollars in claimed money and real cash in the hands of parents.
- 38 Congressional offices met with our leaders, many of whom had never met with an elected official before and were newly trained by Community Change Action, holding the elected officials our leaders supported in 2020 accountable to their promises.

- 340 leaders from Georgia alone attended our weekly relational voter turnout action calls — and are now poised to pivot to defending our democracy and mobilizing a voting machine in 2022. Built in coordination with state partners, our Georgia volunteer program represents one of our strongest state delegations, launched from an event hosted by Community Change Action with Stacey Abrams in 2020. Since then, they have built a durable base active in making calls, holding house meetings, meeting with staff from their Senate and Congressional offices seven times, and keeping their friends and family informed about issue advocacy.

Our Model & Deepened Program in 2022

Combining the core principles of community organizing with new tools, our model creates digital communities, cultivates leaders, and reaches friends and family members who are politically invisible to the traditional campaign apparatus.

RECRUITMENT. Voters are recruited through existing relationships, targeted ads, petitions, & events.

COMMUNITY BUILDING AND POLITICAL EDUCATION. Meetings, on Zoom or IRL, are vibrant spaces for mutual support, political education, and continual growth.

FOLLOW UP. Organizers engage voters via text or phone calls—inviting them to take action & ultimately join political action meetings.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT. Leaders are identified, developed, and trained to drive committees, recruitment, and actions. Leaders invite friends and family to join.

Last cycle we identified a gap in partner **digital capacity**, a critical component for the success and scalability of the program. In 2022, we are working hand-in-hand with our grassroots partners to provide wraparound support and coaching to build, identify, and retain key talent at the local level — incubating grassroots leadership through a one-year fellowship, with the intention of fellows joining partners' state teams at the end of the cycle.

To be successful, partners also need **wraparound data support** for planning, implementation, program optimization, and post-program analysis. Community Change Action supports partners in building lasting data infrastructure with syncs to data warehouses, enriched voter file data, and automated real-time reporting critical for strategic decision making. This includes: impeccable management of data and transparent data sharing agreements with state teams; building and mirroring, when available, state partners' leadership ladders for consistent base-building development; and intentional coaching to maximize learning.

The experience and strength of our partners is clear and they are well-equipped to drive culturally competent in-person engagement. And we believe we can dramatically increase the pace at which we **scale and integrate relational voter turnout with other forms of voter contact** by supporting a hybrid model that pairs digital and online activity with the door knocking and canvassing staples of existing, authentic engagement and organizing. We see an opportunity in 2022 to support partners as they expand their hybrid in-person and online digital organizing footprint.

Our partners' grassroots relational voter turnout programs will be further supported by Community Change Action's **digital acquisition strategy**, generating leads for each state's pipeline. Staff and fellows will also assist in the building of systems for data collection and reporting, including crucial qualitative tactics like story bank collection.

Through this deepened program, we believe we can build robust networks of relational organizing leaders whose reach will match or exceed the margin of victory in 2020.
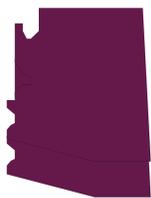
Arizona
LUCHA, Our Voice Our Vote
Voter Engagement Goal: 10,457
RVT Goal: 700 leaders*
Conversations/Canvassed: 30-50K
Register, Persuade, Mobilize

Georgia
NGPAF, Casa in Action
Voter Engagement Goal: 11,779
RVT Goal: 786 leaders
Conversations/Canvassed: 33-55K
Persuade, Mobilize

Nevada
PLAN Action, Make the Road NV
Voter Engagement Goal: 33,596
RVT Goal: 500 leaders
Conversations/Canvassed: 30-50K
Persuade, Mobilize

Wisconsin
VDLF Action, CFRGE
Voter Engagement Goal: 20,682
RVT Goal: 1,378 leaders
Conversations/Canvassed: 60-80K
Register, Persuade, Mobilize

*Based on past results from randomized control tests, our assumption is that each leader will mobilize 10-20 voters.

Hallmarks Of Our Approach

Our relational voter turnout and organizing approach builds on key lessons and insights from past elections to guide us as we expand our structure:

- **Relational voter turnout contributes to progressive victories:** In 2020, our program showed a 20-point bump when outreach came from a friend versus a peer-to-peer text message to a similar demographic pool of voters. Gains were largest for Black, Latino, Native, low-information, young, and immigrant voters. Among Democrats and likely Democrats, Black men displayed the greatest increase in turnout at +21pp, followed by Hispanic women at +17.7pp. *Note: This data is based on A/B testing and therefore it serves broadly as a leading indicator for programmatic impact.*

- **Integrating relational programs multiplies the impact of canvas operations:** By encouraging contacts to join our relational organizing program, not only are voters converted to volunteers, but we also sustain relationships with them long after we've left their door — relationships to help overcome voter suppression, disinformation, and apathy.

- **Relational voter organizing both mobilizes and persuades:** Our relational voter turnout programs are successfully finding, persuading, and turning out voters in target universes on the voter file and reaching voters who are outside the traditional voter files. Volunteers can filter their personal contacts to focus on personal contacts who overlap with an America Votes universe, contacts who need to update their registration, or contacts who have not yet voted as we near Election Day. And in times of chaos, uncertainty, and disinformation, friends and family can be critical voices. Our volunteer training centers deep conversations and provides space for peer learning around hard topics. Volunteer leaders can find the leverage to move their contacts when they are supported by a community of people standing beside them.

- **Relational programs deliver critical voter insights and shape narratives:** Our programs are a real-time barometer of voters' moods and a pulse of voter opinions that can identify and shape narrative trends. This is especially critical for Black and Latino voters, whom the progressive movement struggled to effectively listen to and mobilize in 2020. Feedback from our relational leaders and contacts can be incorporated immediately across all parts of our field and digital programs.

- **Relational voter organizing builds a base of volunteers not only to win elections but also to organize for policy change:** After the election, this infrastructure remains activated. Since November 2020, we've mobilized relational organizing leaders on issue advocacy campaigns to advance bold, popular national legislation that significantly improves the lives and communities of our voters — including immigration reform, child care justice, recovery relief, and an expanded child tax credit — and to create favorable conditions for the midterm elections.

For more information, please contact Grecia Lima — National Political Director of Community Change Action and Executive Director of Community Change Voters — at glima@communitychangeaction.org.

Community Change Action is a 501(c)(4) advocacy organization — with Community Change Voters (PAC) its connected organization. These entities share a common mission and vision for the world, and work in full compliance with state and federal campaign finance laws.